

FISHERIES UPDATE FOR THE WEEK OF JULY 26 - AUGUST 1, 2015.

Compiled by George Pappas - (907) 786-3822, George_Pappas@fws.gov
Office of Subsistence Management, USFWS.

The purpose of the weekly fisheries update is to provide the reader with an overall summary of the status of subsistence related fisheries throughout the state of Alaska. The target audience is the Federal Subsistence Board and its Staff Committee. The report was compiled with the assistance of the Federal in-season managers and OSM staff that provided weekly updated information by the close of business on Friday of the reporting week. My goal is to have the report sent by the close of business the following Monday. Web links have been included to provide additional information. You may obtain additional information on a fishery of particular interest by contacting the in-season manager, provided contacts, follow the provided web links, or contact me.

SOUTHEAST ALASKA

Klag Bay - The Sitka Tribe of Alaska operates the Sockeye Salmon monitoring weir at Klag Bay which is operational as of July 1st. As of 7/29, 1,587 sockeye have passed the weir while approximately 1,000 have been harvested in the subsistence fishery. In 2014, approximately 10,400 sockeye migrated past the weir while an estimated 4,729 sockeye were harvested in the marine terminal area subsistence and sport fishery. Subsistence harvest accounted for over 99% of terminal area harvest.

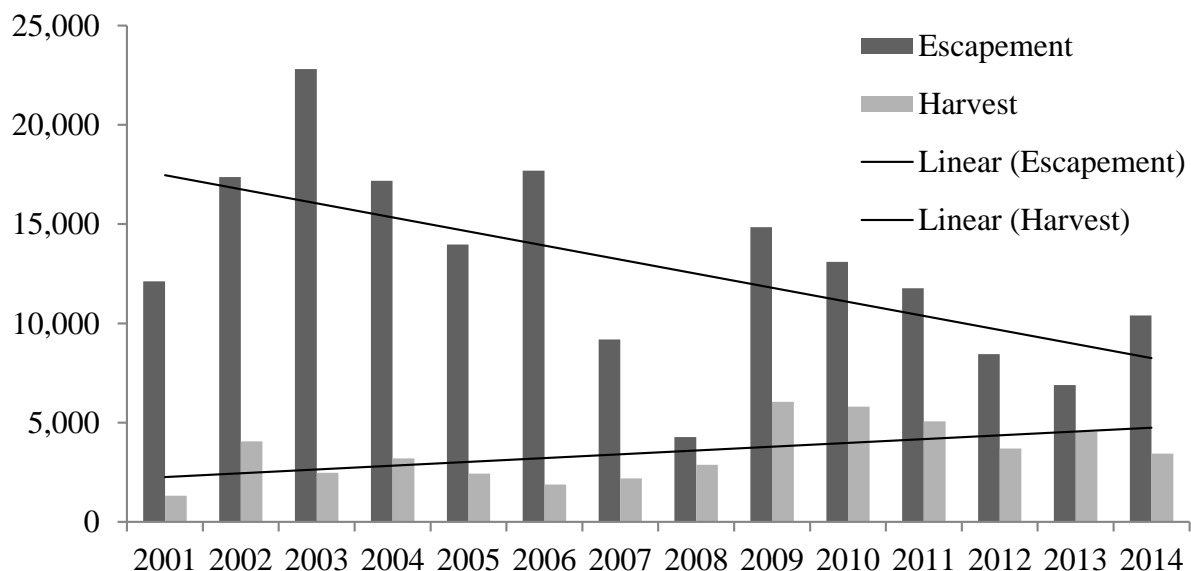


Figure 1. Escapement and harvest of sockeye at Klag Bay, 2001-2014 (Sitka Tribe of Alaska).

Redoubt Lake - The Forest Service operates the Redoubt Lake weir and video-equipped net weir which were operational June 16th. As of July 31st, 5,919 sockeye have passed the weir. High water at the weir on July 28th and 29th resulted in no fish being passed. The weir was not totally inundated and there is no reason to suspect that fish entered the system uncounted. The in-season model is predicting that around 10,000 will return this season. Subsistence harvest is unknown until it is reported to ADF&G. In 2014, an estimated total of 20,549 Sockeye Salmon passed through the weir into Redoubt Lake. The preliminary subsistence sockeye harvest was 1,313.

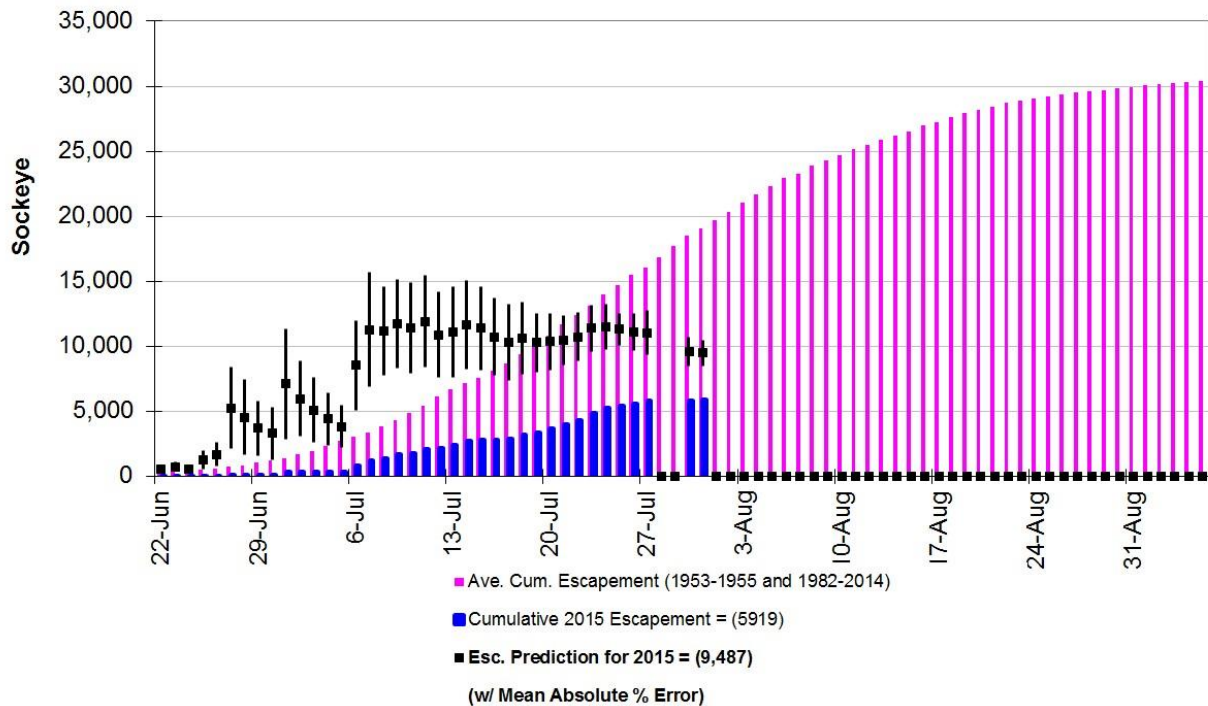


Figure 2. In-season predictions of the final Redoubt Lake sockeye escapement, 2015. Based on weir counts through 7/31/2015. The prediction dropped slightly because no fish were allowed to pass during the high water event.



Figure 3. Aerial view (2013) of the outlet lagoon of Redoubt Lake showing the typical locations of the picket weir, net weir and block nets.

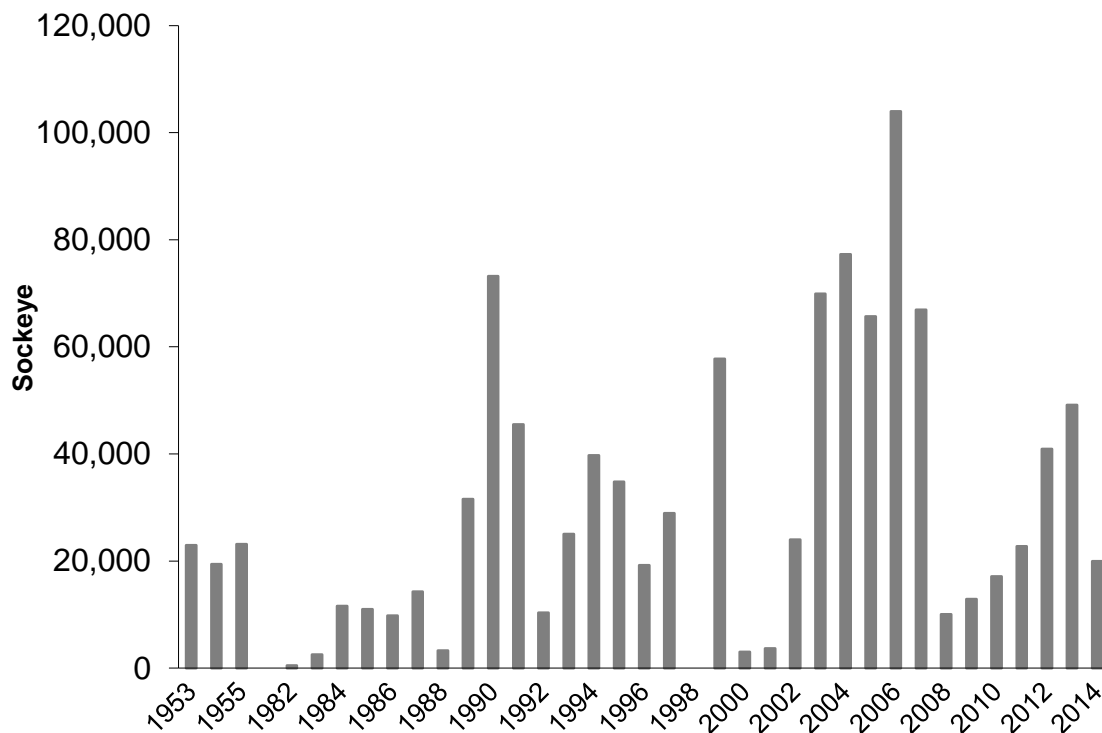


Figure 4. Annual sockeye expanded escapement into Redoubt Lake for years with data: 1953 to 1955, 1982 to 1997, and 1999 to 2014. The weir was not operated in 1998.

Falls Lake - The Forest Service and the Organized Village of Kake operate the Falls Lake trap and video net weir which were operational June 30th. As of July 31st, 1,219 sockeye have been trapped above the fish pass while about 900 have been harvested in the subsistence fishery. Based on the annual average percentage of fish using the fish pass we estimate that the total escapement to date is over 2,000. The subsistence fishery is closed annually from July 14-22 to protect the early portion of the run. The final escapement estimate in 2014 was 2,748 sockeye while the final subsistence and sport harvest in the marine terminal area was 1,542. Subsistence harvest accounted for over 95% of terminal area harvest.

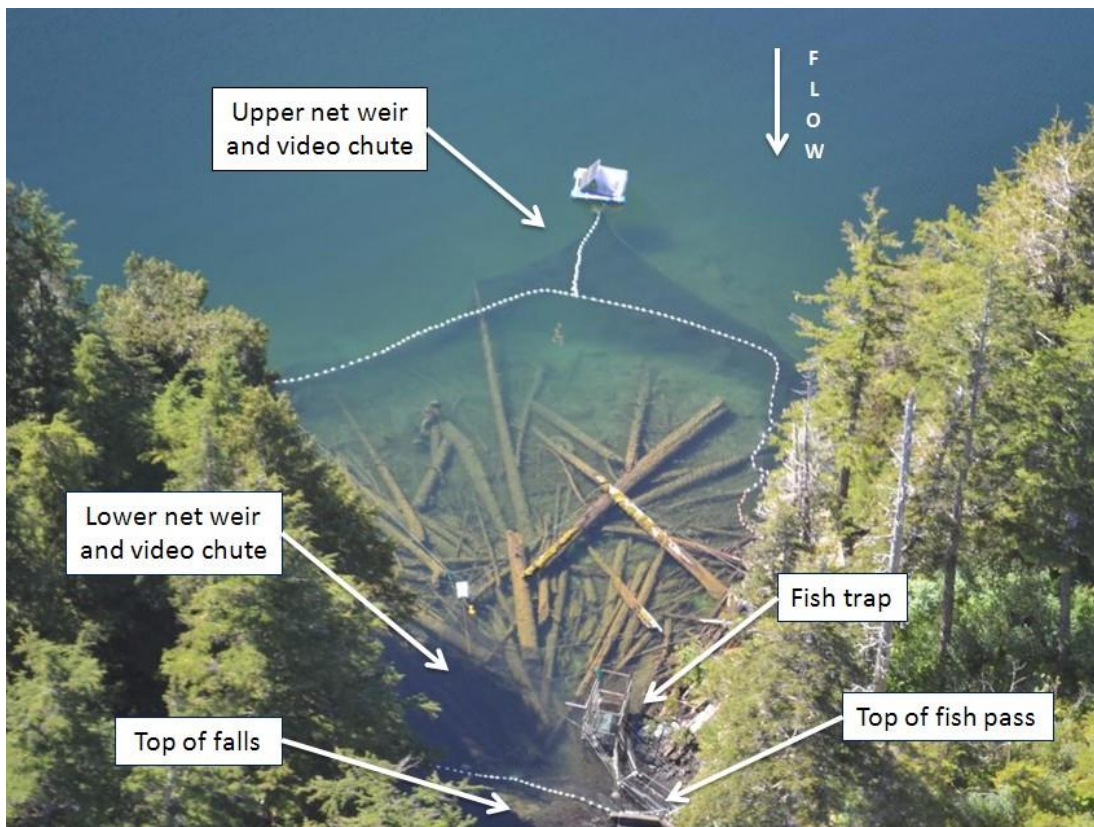


Figure 5. Aerial photo (2013) of the Falls Lake outlet illustrating the typical location of weir equipment.

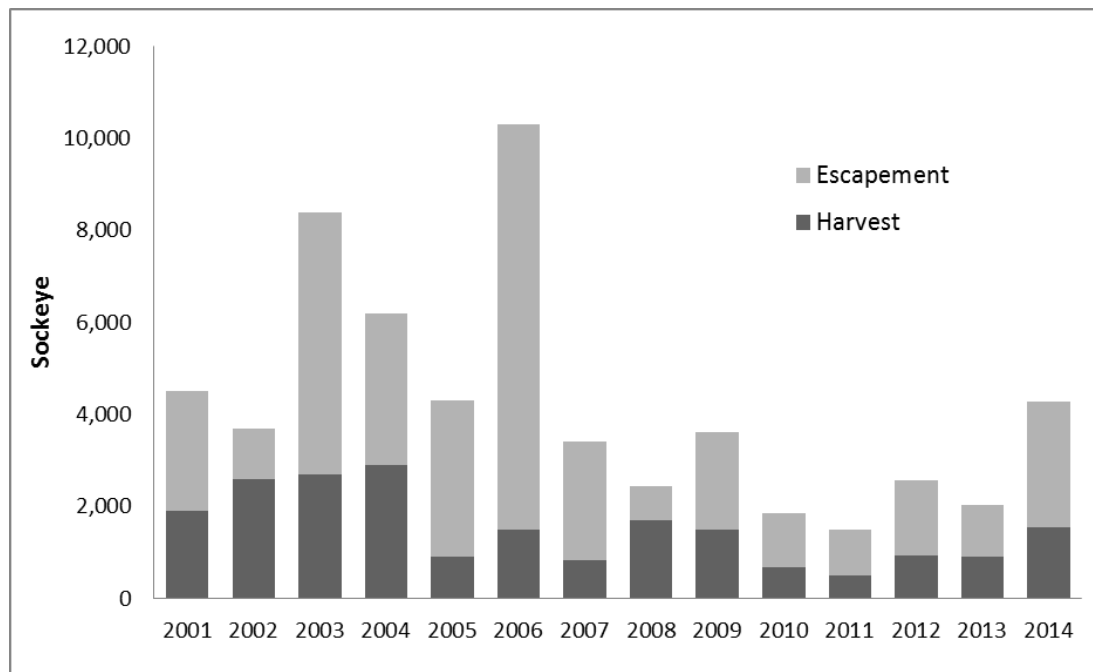


Figure 6. Escapement and harvest of Sockeye Salmon at Falls Lake, 2001-2014.

Wrangell/Petersburg Area – Bob Larson, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest
(907) 772-5930, robertlarson@fs.fed.us

Stat Week 30, ending July 25

Stat Week 31, ending Aug 1

There have been 114 fishing permits issued for the Stikine River subsistence salmon fishery. Weather conditions have been poor this week with considerable rain and wind. There were no fishermen observed during the most recent field survey. The estimated cumulative subsistence harvest is 50 Chinook, 5 Coho and 1,400 Sockeye Salmon. The Region's pink salmon one day catch exceeded 2 million fish this week and seine, troll and gillnet fisheries were open throughout the Region. Halibut have been abundant in both the commercial and sport fisheries.

The following link is the ADF&G weekly salmon commercial fishery update for Yakutat and Southeast Alaska.

http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareasoutheast.salmonfishery_updates

Yakutat, Juneau, and Admiralty areas of Northern Southeast Alaska - Ben Van Alen, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest
(907)-789-6257 bvanalen@fs.fed.us or Jake Musslewhite (907) 789-6256

In the Yakutat area, as of July 28, ADF&G personnel have counted 79,926 sockeye salmon through their weir on the lower Situk River. This count is 10,000 fish above ADF&G's 30,000 to 70,000 biological escapement goal range. Compared with historical weir counts, the sockeye run is about 89 percent over. In contrast, the count of Chinook salmon through the Situk River weir is only 169 large fish and is well below ADF&G's 450 to 1,050 goal range. No Chinook salmon have been counted through the weir since July 20, and, based weir count averages, 96 percent of the Chinook salmon had entered the river by now. ADF&G has not allowed retention of Chinook salmon in their sport and commercial set gillnet fisheries and the Forest Service has not issued permits for the subsistence take of Chinook salmon. ADF&G has also moderated fishing times in the set net fishery and closed waters near the mouth of the Situk River in an effort to protect Chinook salmon. This is the sixth season that we have taken management actions to protect Chinook salmon returning to the Situk River. The broad overlap in timing of these two species through the Situk/Ahrnklin set gillnet fishery makes it difficult to harvest sockeye without catching Chinook salmon.

In the northern inside waters of Southeast Alaska, the sockeye run past ADF&G's fish wheels in the lower Chilkat River is about twice the historical average and ADF&G's sockeye count into Chilkat Lake is at the lower end of the goal range. The sockeye count though ADF&G's weir on the Chilkoot River weir is well within goal ranges. Catches of sockeye salmon in the joint U.S./Canadian Taku River fishwheels are near historical averages. Douglas Island Pink and Chum Hatchery personnel have now counted 218 sockeye salmon through their weir on the outlet of Speel Lake.

The commercial purse seine fishery fished a one day opening on Sunday and a two-day opening on Thursday and Friday this week – the sixth week of the season. Areas open included the Whitestone/Augusta, Tenakee Inlet, and Admiralty Island shoreline. The seine effort and catch rates for pink salmon were reasonably high. The Hidden Falls hatchery area is still closed due to low returns of hatchery chum salmon this season. Chum, coho, pink, and sockeye salmon harvested in northern seine fisheries have been selling for \$0.51, \$0.17, \$0.20, and \$1.13 per pound, respectively, this season.

As of July 29, project personnel from the Hoonah Indian Association have counted and validated 908 sockeye salmon through the pair of video weirs at the outlet of Neva Lake. About 46% of the Neva sockeye salmon are in the lake now based on the average of 11 years of historical weir counts. At Kook Lake, Angoon Community Association employees have counted 3,047 sockeye salmon through the pair of video weirs as of July 29. It is difficult to use historical weir counts to access the timing of this run since the migration of fish into the lake is directly affected by the commercial purse seine fishing effort in Icy Strait and Chatham Strait.

Prince of Wales and Ketchikan District Area – Jeff Reeves, Forest Service, Tongass National Forest. (907) 826-1649 jreeves@fs.fed.us

There have been 231 permits issued for the 2015 Federal subsistence salmon fishery in the Southeast Alaska and Yakutat areas. Most effort typically occurs on Prince of Wales Island and is directed at Coho Salmon.

Subsistence effort will close in most Prince of Wales Systems July 31st. Klawock's season will run until August 7 and Hetta/Eek will run through August.

Sockeye Salmon weirs are currently active and fishing at Hatchery Creek and Hetta. To date 4,737 Sockeye and 134 Coho Salmon have passed through at Hatchery Creek. Total count at the Hetta weir is 375 Sockeye Salmon. Passage at Klawock Lake has started with 764 Sockeye, 821 Pink and 5 Chinook Salmon.

Commercial fisheries within Districts 1-4 are in full swing. Total estimated harvests in these districts to date are: 147,225 Sockeye, 63,035 Coho, 1,463,600 Pink and 1,232,900 Chum Salmon.

Southeast Alaska Web Links

Tongass National Forest News Room <http://www.fs.usda.gov/news/tongass/news-events>

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Southeastern Alaska Area
http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Southeast.pdf

ADF&G Sport and Personal Use Fishing News Release and Emergency Order Link
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/EONR/index.cfm?ADFG=region.R1>

ADF&G Commercial Fisheries News Release and Emergency Order Link
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>

Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Southeast Alaska
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R1.home>

Statewide ADF&G Fish counts
<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/>

SOUTHCENTRAL ALASKA

Prince William Sound – Copper River – Molly McCormick, Wrangell-St. Elias National Park/Preserve. (907) 822-7280 Molly_McCormick@nps.gov

The ADF&G sonar at Miles Lake (located just downstream of the Million Dollar Bridge in the lower Copper River) was pulled on July 27 with a final estimate of 1,341,545 salmon. This estimate is 192% of the projected escapement objective of 700,490 for this date, or 641,055 more salmon. It is the highest escapement counted at the Miles Lake sonar since it started in 1978. An estimate of 4,386 salmon migrated by the sonar counter on the final day of counting.

MILES LAKE SONAR ESTIMATES (TOTAL SALMON)

| Year | Estimate | Year | Estimate | Year | Estimate | Year | Estimate |
|-------------|----------|-------------|-----------|-------------|----------|-------------|------------------|
| 1978 | 107,011 | 1988 | 488,398 | 1998 | 866,957 | 2008 | 614,999 |
| 1979 | 237,173 | 1989 | 607,797 | 1999 | 848,921 | 2009 | 709,330 |
| 1980 | 276,538 | 1990 | 581,895 | 2000 | 587,592 | 2010 | 924,010 |
| 1981 | 535,263 | 1991 | 579,435 | 2001 | 833,569 | 2011 | 914,285 |
| 1982 | 467,306 | 1992 | 601,952 | 2002 | 819,000 | 2012 | 1,271,354 |
| 1983 | 545,724 | 1993 | 797,902 | 2003 | 695,233 | 2013 | 1,267,060 |
| 1984 | 536,806 | 1994 | 715,181 | 2004 | 669,646 | 2014 | 1,218,418 |
| 1985 | 436,313 | 1995 | 599,265 | 2005 | 854,268 | 2015 | 1,341,545 |
| 1986 | 509,275 | 1996 | 906,867 | 2006 | 959,731 | | |
| 1987 | 483,478 | 1997 | 1,148,079 | 2007 | 926,438 | | |

Commercial harvests in the Copper River District of Prince William Sound so far are:

- 22,761 Chinook
- 1,481,044 sockeye
- 6,609 coho
- 54,777 pink
- 14,660 chum

The Chitina Subdistrict is open and scheduled to remain open throughout the rest of the season – through September 30, 2015. The state and federal fisheries in the Chitina Subdistrict usually follow identical fishing schedules which are set by the state. Eighty Federal Chitina Subdistrict permits have been issued on FWS's online data base plus additional permits that have been issued in NPS ranger stations that do not have internet connectivity.

The Glennallen Subdistrict opened for Federal subsistence users on May 15th and is expected to remain open until September 30th. 290 Federal Glennallen Subdistrict permits have been issued on FWS's online data base. Additional permits for this subdistrict have been issued in Chitina and Kennecott, NPS ranger stations that do not have internet connectivity. The state subsistence fishery in the Glennallen Subdistrict opened on June 1st.

The Batzulnetas Area fishery opened on May 15 and is expected to remain open until September 30, 2015. Four permits have been issued so far.

The Tanada Creek weir was operational on May 27. The crew has counted 3,441 sockeye salmon migrating through the weir as of August 2.

The Long Lake weir started operating on July 28. No fish have migrated through the weir yet.



Picture of the Long Lake weir with fish chute and camera box viewed from upstream.

2,626 Chinook were tagged this year at the two project fishwheels in Baird Canyon operated by the Native Village of Eyak; 128 were recaptured at the Canyon Creek wheels. The Baird Canyon wheels stopped operating for the season on July 10. The Canyon Creek wheels stopped operating for the season on July 26.

ADF&G's counting tower in the Gulkana River was installed on June 2. As of July 30, 3,216 Chinook and 21,834 sockeye have been counted.

Effective June 20, 2015, by emergency order of ADF&G, the bag and possession limit for sport-caught sockeye salmon 16 inches or longer in the Copper River drainage increased from 3 to 6.

Five Special Actions have been issued by the park this season:

- delaying the starting date of the Chitina River federal salmon fishery and setting the pre-season schedule for the fishery
- amending the preseason schedule for the Chitina Subdistrict for the week of July 6 – July 12, allowing a full week (168 hours) of fishing, and providing the tentative schedule for future fishing periods
- amending the preseason schedule for the Chitina Subdistrict for the week of July 13-19, allowing a full week (168 hours) of fishing
- amending the preseason schedule for the Chitina Subdistrict for the week of July 20-26, allowing a full week (168 hours) of fishing
- amending the preseason schedule for the Chitina Subdistrict for the week of July 27- August 2, allowing a full week (168 hours) of fishing

Links

ADF&G Miles Lake daily sonar estimates

http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.salmon_escapement

NVE's Chinook Escapement Monitoring project in the Copper River

<http://eyak.fishscan.com>

ADF&G Copper River Inseason Commercial Harvest Estimates

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareacopperriver.harvestsummary>

Gulkana River counting tower – ADF&G

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/index.cfm?ADFG=main.LocSelectYearSpecies>

Wrangell-St. Elias National Park and Preserve Subsistence User's Guide

<http://www.nps.gov/wrst/historyculture/upload/Subsistence%20brochure.pdf>

Prince William Sound Federal Subsistence Regulations including Copper River.

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Prince.pdf

Gulkana River counting tower – ADF&G

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/index.cfm?ADFG=main.LocSelectYearSpecies>

Link to article in the Peninsula Clarion about the smaller-than-average trend for sockeye salmon this season

<http://peninsulaclarion.com/news/2015-06-25/across-state-early-salmon-catches-underweight>

PWS and Copper River Flats – Milo Burcham, Forest Service, Cordova.

(907) 424-4759 mburcham@fs.fed.us

Copper River District opened at 7:00 am, Thursday, July 30 for a 36-hour commercial fishing period. Cumulative sonar count through July 28 was 1.35 million fish, whereas the anticipated count for this date is 707,000 fish. Effective at 12:00 am this morning both north and south bank sonars were pulled for the season. For the week ending July 11, the actual Copper River delta survey count was 45,960 sockeye salmon versus an

anticipated range 30,055 – 71,040. Hatchery contributions from the period that closed on July 17 were 39% Gulkana Hatchery.

A total of 42 Federal Subsistence fishing permits have been issued for freshwaters within the Prince William Sound of Chugach National Forest to date. Ninety-one permits were issued last season. Harvest by this year's permit holders will not be known until reports are returned this winter. In 2014, 630 coho and 76 sockeye were harvested on Copper River Delta fresh waters in this fishery.

Cook Inlet Area – Jeff Anderson, Field Supervisor, Kenai Fish and Wildlife Field Office (907) 260-0132 Jeffrey_Anderson@fws.gov

Subsistence users have started to harvest late-run Sockeye Salmon in the subsistence dip net fishery at the Russian River Falls and harvest of 924 Sockeye Salmon has been reported through July 30. Harvest of 65 Sockeye Salmon has been reported in the Kasilof River subsistence dip net fishery and harvest of 233 Sockeye Salmon has been reported in the Kasilof River experimental community gillnet fishery through July 30. The last day for the Kasilof River experimental community gillnet fishery is July 31. Totals of 131 Kenai River permits, 32 Kasilof River permits, and 13 Designated Fisher permits have been issued through July 30.

Emergency Special Action 10-KS-01-15 remains in effect which closed the Federal subsistence fishery for Chinook Salmon in the Kenai River downstream from the outlet of Skilak Lake through Saturday, August 15, 2015. This closure prohibits all subsistence fishing for Chinook Salmon, including dip net, rod and reel, and community gillnet fisheries.

Fish Counts through July 29:

| | | |
|--|---------|---------------------------|
| Russian River early-run sockeye (weir) | 50,226 | (count ended on July 14) |
| Russian River late-run sockeye (weir) | 10,712 | (count began on July 15) |
| Kenai River late-run sockeye (sonar) | 833,167 | (counts began on July 1) |
| Kasilof River sockeye (sonar) | 400,964 | (counts began on June 15) |
| Kenai River early-run Chinook (sonar) | 6,190 | (counts ended on June 30) |
| Kenai River late-run Chinook (sonar) | 15,934 | (counts began on July 1) |

Kodiak Island Area – Anne Marie LaRosa, Refuge Manager, - Kodiak NWR

(907) 487-2600/0230 AnneMarie_LaRosa@fws.gov or
Kevin Van Hatten (907) 487-0230 Kevin_VanHatten@fws.gov

The west side late run sockeye salmon returns have continued to meet escapement goals in the Chignik, Karluk, and Ayakulik Rivers. As of Thursday July 30, 2015, 286,594 sockeye salmon have passed the Karluk River weir (escapement goal range 110,000 to 250,000 fish); Ayakulik River passed 250,854 sockeye salmon (escapement goal range:

140,000 to 280,000 fish); Litnik “Afognak” River system reported passing 36,301 sockeye salmon (escapement goal range: 20,000 to 50,000 fish); Buskin River reported passing 7,791 sockeye salmon (escapement goal range: 5,000 to 8,000 fish). ADF&G continued to extend commercial openings in the outer Karluk and Sturgeon sections as well as the Alitak District in the southeast portion of Kodiak.

Around the island, Pinks are showing up and in especially good numbers in Dog Salmon Creek with nearly 200,000 to date.

Residents around the island have thus far been able to harvest for subsistence needs, although Buskin and Litnik have been reportedly slow. Some village residents look forward to harvesting pinks and more subsistence fishing will continue in the fall as coho salmon arrive. Currently with the ongoing commercial openings, subsistence harvests have slowed and sport harvest is picking up on the road system.

The Pasagshak and Saltery River sockeye salmon runs are also used by subsistence users, but the Pasagshak run has not yet materialized and due to low numbers ADF&G has increased the restricted area for this system.

Subsistence restrictions have been set on both the Karluk and Ayakulik Rivers for Chinook salmon. The Chinook runs on both these systems are poor and are not expected to meet their respective escapement goals. Sport fishing for Chinook salmon is already restricted through the end of the season. Subsistence fishing for Chinook salmon in Monashka Bay has been restricted through the end of the season, usually the end of August.

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Kodiak Area

<http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/pdf/fishregs13/kodiak.pdf>

Bristol Bay and Chignik – Doug McBride Fisheries Branch Chief Anchorage Fish and Wildlife Field Office

(907) 271-2871 Doug_McBride@fws.gov

The inseason manager has taken a new position and weekly summaries for the Bristol Bay and Chignik Areas have likely concluded for the 2015 season.

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Bristol Bay Area

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Bristol.pdf

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Chignik Area

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/chignik.pdf

Southcentral Alaska Web Links

Federal Subsistence Management Fisheries News Releases

<http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/news/fishing/index.cfm>

ADF&G Sport and Personal Use Fishing News Release and Emergency Order link

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=fishingSportFishingInfo.R2>

ADF&G Commercial Fisheries News Release and Emergency Order Link

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>

Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Southcentral Alaska

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R2.Home>

Statewide ADF&G Fish counts:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/>

Yukon River – Gerald Maschmann, Fish Biologist USFWS Fairbanks Office.

Gerald_Maschmann@fws.gov or

Fred Bue Fredrick_Bue@fws.gov

Emmonak Summer Office (907) 949-1798

The Emmonak Field Office is open for the fall season.

Fall Season Outlook and Management Actions

The Yukon Area began Fall Season management in the lower river districts on July 16. Districts 1-3, and Subdistrict 4-A are well within fall season management. At this time, Subdistrict 4-B and 4-C is transitioning to fall season management. Based on the 2015 summer chum salmon run performance, the projected fall chum salmon run size is expected to be between 700,000 and 800,000 fish. This level of abundance should be adequate to meet escapement and subsistence priorities and provide for commercial harvest. The Pilot Station sonar project is near the first quarter point and estimates are currently tracking above average for fall chum salmon. Subsistence fishermen have been heavily restricted during the summer season and are looking for fall chum to complete their subsistence salmon needs.

Subsistence salmon fishing has been relaxed in Districts 1, 2, and 3 to 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, restricted to 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear. Subsistence salmon fishing will be closed 12-hours before, during, and 12-hours after commercial fishing. Commercial fishing for fall chum has begun in Districts 1 and 2. Four periods have been opened in District 1 and three periods have been opened in District 2. The preliminary commercial harvest is 32,081 fall chum and 1,048 coho. Subsistence salmon fishing in Districts 4-6 has been relaxed to their normal subsistence fishing schedule, restricted to 7.5-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear and fish wheels. Additionally, District 4 has been

liberalized from 5 days per week to 7 days per week, and Subdistricts 5-A, 5-B, and 5-C is expected to be liberalized to 7 days per week on August 4.

Fall Season Assessment Information

The Lower Yukon Test Fishery (LYTF) shifted to fall season assessment on July 16. At this time the cumulative CPUE is 257.00, below the average of 380.36. The Mt. Village Test Fishery (MVTF) began operations on July 18 and has a cumulative CPUE of 451.12, below the average at this time of 543.53. The Pilot Station sonar shifted to fall season assessment on July 19 and has a cumulative estimated passage of 171,444 fall chum above the average estimated passage of 144,269. The first pulse of approximately 100,000 fall chum passed the sonar on July 20 and 21. A second pulse is expected to pass the sonar on July 31-August 2.

Summer Season Outlook and Management Strategies

The current end of season projection is for a poor Chinook salmon total run size of just above the lower end of the preseason projection range of 118,000 to 140,000 fish. The current in season summer chum salmon run projection is for a run of approximately 1.8 million, at the low end of the pre-season projection of 1.8-2.4 million chum, enough to provide for escapement needs, normal subsistence harvest levels, and a surplus for other uses.

Summer Season Assessment Information

The Chinook and summer chum salmon runs are over in the lower Yukon. Subdistrict 4-B and 4-C is transitioning to fall season at this time. The fourth and final pulse of Chinook salmon has passed across the border and managers expect passage past the Eagle sonar to begin declining for the rest of the summer season.

Summer season escapement projects are well past there $\frac{3}{4}$ point and nearing their completion dates. For Chinook salmon, projects have at least exceeded their minimum Chinook salmon escapement goals or are above average passage, except for the Gisasa River weir which is slightly below its average passage. Summer chum salmon escapement goals have been met or projects are near or above their average passage estimates. Estimated passage of Chinook salmon past the Eagle sonar is above the high end of the Canadian escapement goal. Escapement goals were met as result of the severe Chinook salmon subsistence fishing restrictions that were implemented this year.

Summer Season Management Actions

Conservative management actions implemented this year were in accordance with the preseason management plan outlined in the 2015 Yukon River Salmon Fisheries Outlook. As planned, subsistence salmon fishing was restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh gillnet gear early in the season, closed to protect the first pulse, and opened with selective gear, such as dip nets, beach seines, and live release fish wheels to harvest abundant chum salmon. Later in the season, subsistence salmon fishing was relaxed to allow more fishing time with gear restricted to 6-inch or smaller mesh size and fish wheels with the intent to focus harvest on smaller Chinook salmon as a way to maintain quality of escapement. As the districts 1-4 transitioned to fall season, restrictions were lifted to 7.5-inch or less mesh

gillnet gear. Since the Eagle sonar was estimated to be above the high end of the escapement goal, and District 5 had the most severe restrictions of the season, District 5 restrictions were lifted before the fall season transition date to give subsistence fishermen opportunity to harvest end of the season Chinook salmon.

Fifty-four commercial salmon fishing periods had been scheduled in Districts 1 and 2 restricted to dip nets and beach seines, early in the season, and restricted to 5.5-inch and 6-inch gillnet gear later in the season when the majority of Chinook salmon had passed through the lower Yukon. Six commercial salmon fishing periods have been scheduled in District 6. The preliminary commercial harvests for the summer season are 354,086 summer chum, 3,240 Chinook salmon caught but not sold, and 9,513 Chinook salmon caught and released.

Consultation

Federal and State managers have visited the upriver communities of Beaver, Venetie, Chalkyitsik, Circle and Fort Yukon, and lower river communities of Pilot Station and Anvik to discuss management strategies and address fishermen's concerns. Additional visits to other communities are anticipated this season. Weekly YRDFA teleconferences began on June 2, and a YAG (Yukon Advisory Group) meeting was held on June 18. Another YAG meeting was held, Monday, July 13, to discuss subsistence fishing opportunities for District 5 and review the fall season management.

Kuskokwim River – Neil Lalonde, Refuge Manager, Yukon Delta National Wildlife Refuge Neil_Lalonde@fws.gov or
Robert Sundown (907) 543-1007 Robert_Sundown@fws.gov

No report for last week. Report expected next week.

Yukon-Kuskokwim-Interior Alaska Web Links

Federal Subsistence Management Fisheries News Releases:

<http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/news/fishing/index.cfm>

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Yukon–Northern Area

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Yukon.pdf

NEW = Kuskokwim River Updates Hosted on OSM Website

<http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/kuskokwim.cfm>

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for Kuskokwim Area

http://www.doi.gov/subsistence/regulation/fish_shell/upload/Kusko.pdf

ADF&G Sport and Personal Use Fishing News Release and Emergency Order link:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/EONR/index.cfm?ADFG=region.R3>

ADF&G Commercial Fisheries News Release and Emergency Order Link:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>

Weekly ADF&G Sport Fishing Reports for Interior Alaska:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishingReports/index.cfm?ADFG=R3.home>

Statewide ADF&G Fish counts:

<http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/sf/FishCounts/>

Northwest Alaska – Ken Adkisson, National Park Service, Nome.

(907) 443-2522 Ken_Adkisson@nps.gov

Norton Sound District

The ADF&G has switched to silver salmon management. Early season silver catches have been very good and the department forecast of 60,000 to 90,000 fish in the commercial fishery is projected to be easily reached and may be exceeded depending on decent fishing weather.

Commercial Fishing: Preliminary Norton Sound salmon catches this season are 1,100 kings, 143,000 chums, 4,000 sockeyes, 65,000 pinks, and 25,000 silvers by 120 permit holders. The chum catch may finish as high as 11th best in the 55-year history of the commercial fishery and the best harvest since 1983.

Sport Fishing: All waters from Bald Head to Point Romanof remain closed to sport fishing for Chinook salmon.

Unalakleet (Subdistrict 6)

The Federal public waters of the Unalakleet River upstream of the Chirosky River remained closed to the taking of Chinook salmon by all users from July 1 to July 31 under Federal subsistence regulations.

Commercial Fishing: Commercial Fishing: There were two 48- hour periods this week with gillnets restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or less. The commercial catch this season is 300 kings, 450 sockeyes, 33,000 pinks, 34,000 chums and 17,000 silvers. All kings caught were required to be kept and not sold. The July silver catch has been the best since 2008.

North River Tower – Camp J.B. - A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has escapement goals of 1,200-2,600 kings; 25,000 pinks; 550-1,100 silvers (aerial survey); and no goal yet established for chums. Cumulative counts through August 1 were 1,900 kings, 19,000 chums, 408,000 pinks and 1,400 silvers. The silver count through July is the highest in 5 years.

Unalakleet River Floating Weir – A cooperative project of Fish & Game, Native Village of Unalakleet, United States BLM and NSEDC with major funding provided by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, Office of Subsistence Management. There are no weir escapement goals yet. Cumulative counts through August 1 were 2,750 kings, 88,000 chums, 1.4 million pinks, 880 sockeyes and 11,000 silvers. The project began in 2010, and through July the silver count is the best in history.

Shaktoolik (Subdistrict 5)

Commercial Fishing: There were two 48- hour periods this week with gillnets restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or less. The commercial catch this season is 34 kings, 50 sockeyes, 14,000 pinks, 25,000 chums and 5,000 silvers. All kings caught were required to be kept and not sold. The July silver catch has been the best since 2008.

Shaktoolik Tower – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has no escapement goals yet established. Cumulative counts through August 1 were 600 kings, 26,000 chums, 376,000 pinks, and 8,600 silvers.

Norton Bay (Subdistrict 4)

Commercial Fishing: There were two 48- hour periods this week with gillnets restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or less. The commercial catch this season is 220 kings, 240 sockeyes, 12,000 pinks, 24,000 chums and 1,100 silvers. The chum catch is the third best all-time, and the July silver catch is only trailing last year's record catch

Inglutalik River Tower – A cooperative project of NSEDC and ADF&G. No escapement goals have been established. Cumulative counts through July 30 were 1,400 kings, 61,000 chums, 740,000 pinks and 6,500 silvers. Silver counts are above average.

Elim (Subdistrict 3)

Commercial Fishing: There were two 48- hour periods this week with gillnets restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or less. The commercial catch this season is 500 kings, 2,100 sockeyes, 4,000 pinks, 38,000 chums and 1,400 silvers. The July silver catch is only trailing last year's record catch.

Kwiniuk River Tower – A Fish & Game project with assistance from NSEDC has escapement goals of 300-550 kings; 11,500 – 23,000 chums; 8,400 pinks; and 650-1,300 silvers (aerial survey goal). Cumulative counts through August 1 were 320 kings, 38,000 chums, 95,000 pinks, 27 sockeyes and 340 silvers. The silver count through July is the second best in 5 years.

Golovin (Subdistrict 2)

Commercial Fishing: There were two 48- hour periods this week with gillnets restricted to a mesh size of 6 inches or less. The commercial catch this season is 60 kings, 1,000 sockeyes, 1,300 pinks, 17,000 chums and 500 silvers. The July silver catch is trailing recent years, but 3 of the 5 best silver harvests occurred in the last 5 years.

Fish River Tower - A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game. No escapement goals have been established. Cumulative counts through August 1 were 2,260 kings, 142,000 chums, 185,000 pinks and 1,300 silvers. This is the second year of the Fish River project.

Nome (Subdistrict 1)

Commercial Fishing: The last 48-hour commercial fishing period ended Monday. The commercial catch this season is 3 kings, 90 sockeyes, 550 pinks, 5,000 chums and 15 silvers. Commercial salmon fishing returned in 2013 after no fishing since 1996. The chum catch is the best since 1987.

Subsistence Fishing: Beach seining is no longer allowed. The subsistence set gillnet schedule in the marine waters west of Cape Nome is from 6:00 p.m. Monday until 6:00 p.m. Saturday. The marine waters east of Cape Nome are open seven days a week. There are no catch limits when fishing in marine waters. The fresh water subsistence area set gillnet schedule is from 6:00 p.m. Monday until 6:00 p.m. Wednesday and from 6:00 p.m. Thursday until 6:00 p.m. Saturday. Catch limits vary by river and fishermen should check the backs of their permits. The chum salmon limit for the Nome and Snake rivers has been waived.

Solomon River Weir – A Fish & Game project, has no escapement goals yet established. The cumulative counts through August 1 were 2 kings, 700 chums, 12,000 pinks and 6 silvers. The average third quarter point the last two years has been July 29.

Eldorado River Weir – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has an escapement goal of 6,000 – 9,200 chum salmon. The project is complete for this season. Cumulative counts through July 30 were 25 kings, 25,000 chums and 1,500 pinks and 1 silver. The chum count ranked third highest in 20 years. .

Nome River Weir – A Fish & Game project with assistance from NSEDC has an escapement goal of 2,900 – 4,300 chum salmon and 3,200 pink salmon. The cumulative counts through August 1 were 6 kings, 5,200 chums, 65,000 pinks, 32 sockeyes, and 23 silvers. The average historical third quarter point is July 30 for chums, and August 4 for pinks. The first quarter point for silvers is August 14.

Snake River Weir – A cooperative project between Fish & Game and NSEDC has an escapement goal of 1,600 – 2,500 chum salmon. The cumulative counts through August 1 were 3,550 chums, 10,400 pinks, and 24 silvers. The average historical third quarter point is July 28 for chums, and August 4 for pinks. The first quarter point for silvers is August 14.

Glacial Lake Weir – A cooperative project between Fish & Game and NSEDC has an escapement goal of 800 – 1,600 sockeyes based on aerial survey. A video system is used. The count through July 12 was 9,250 sockeyes, 16 river otters and 7 ducks.

Port Clarence District

All subsistence sockeye salmon limits at Pilgrim River have been waived. Fishermen need to check the back of their permit for limits on other salmon. Subsistence gillnet and beach seining is open 7 days a week. The Pilgrim River has required subsistence permits since 1964, and a record 351 Pilgrim River subsistence permits have been issued so far this season. The previous record was 265 permits issued in 2013. Looking back 20 years ago, there were 14 permits issued in 1995 with catch limits of 10 sockeyes salmon. The first time 100 permits or more were issued was in 2003, and beginning in 2004 more than 200 permits have been issued 7 times in the last 12 years.

Pilgrim River Weir – A cooperative project of NSEDC with assistance from Fish & Game has an escapement goal of 4,000 – 8,000 sockeyes based on aerial survey at Salmon Lake & Grand Central tributary to Salmon Lake. The cumulative counts through August 1 were 90 kings, 26,000 chums, 2,000 pinks, and 30,000 sockeyes. The sockeye run has been strong the past week with 4 of 7 days having a passage of over 1,000 sockeyes per day. The only other time the run showed that strong a finish at the end of July was in 2005 when the escapement was 56,000 sockeyes for the season. By August 1, the average historical passage through the weir for sockeyes is 90%.

Kotzebue District

The commercial harvest in the Kotzebue fishery in July was 149,000 chum salmon. This compares with the 2013 July harvest of 283,000 chums. There continues to be only one buyer this year and the buyer has been putting Kotzebue fishermen on catch limits. The previous week's limit was 3,000 pounds per permit holder. This last week of July, the limit was 1,500 pounds per permit holder. This week 71 permit holders fished during 6-hour fishing periods on Thursday and Friday. That was the most permit holders to fish one fishing period since 1994, and back then it was a 36-hour fishing period. Because the buyer has fishermen on catch limits, this year's run strength is a little harder to determine other than being a strong run again this year.

Kobuk River Test Fish - Fish & Game project. The chum catch through July is the third highest in the 23-year project history, trailing 2008 and 2014 catches. The chum run through July appears to be more similar to 2008 based on the amount of fishing that occurred in the commercial fishery that year. The chum run is not nearly as strong as last year's record run based on this year's catch. The catch restrictions on the fishing fleet this year are also likely allowing more chum salmon to reach the spawning grounds.

Federal Subsistence Fisheries Regulations for the Kotzebue Area
<http://alaska.fws.gov/asm/pdf/fishregs11/norton.pdf>